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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000643

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: BUENOS AIRES GOVERNOR'S OFFICE THANKS
AMBASSADOR FOR COLLABORATION

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0443 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Secretary General to the Buenos Aires Governor's Office Jose Scioli (JS) visited Ambassador Wayne May 29 to extend the appreciation of his brother, Buenos Aires Governor Daniel Scioli, for the Embassy's close collaboration. JS is a chief adviser to Governor Scioli, Argentina's former vice president and a leading presidential contender. JS predicted the Kirchner-allied ruling Victory Front (FpV) would win the June 28 mid-term congressional elections in the province by a small margin. He added that their narrow victory would probably cost them their Congressional majority, an eventuality the FpV is prepared for and which will force them to negotiate legislation. JS acknowledged that his brother, who encountered violent protests the day before while campaigning in the province's rural interior, is feeling the pressures of running for office. End Summary.

Appreciation for Embassy Collaboration

¶2. (SBU) Jose Scioli (JS) visited Ambassador Wayne May 29 to bid the Ambassador farewell and to extend the Governor's appreciation for the Embassy's close collaboration. As Scioli's chief advisor, JS has been an approachable and valuable contact of the Embassy. JS relayed that the Governor particularly appreciated the Ambassador's helpful recommendation earlier in the Governor's administration that the province take a more active role against narcotrafficking. JS said the Governor took the Ambassador's suggestion on board and, as a result, the province has seized more drugs in the Governor's 17 months in office than in previous years. The Ambassador replied that fighting drugs is a necessary and arduous battle that will take years to address. JS readily agreed, noting that although the public wants the situation resolved in months, it is a long-term problem and affects all sectors of society. Commenting on the challenges in stopping the transit of drugs, JS expressed concern that although the United States might tighten security along the Mexican border, drug traffickers will find an alternative route.

The June 28 Mid-terms

¶3. (C) JS predicted that the Kirchner-allied ruling Victory Front (FpV) would win the legislative elections on June 28, but by a small margin (reftel). He added that the narrow victory would probably cost them their majority in the Argentine Congress, an eventuality for which the FpV is prepared and that will force them to negotiate legislation. The Ambassador replied that negotiation is healthy for a democracy.

¶4. (C) JS acknowledged that his brother is feeling the heat for running as a "symbolic candidate" in the June 28 legislative elections and referred to a highly publicized incident the previous day when farm sector supporters pelted the Governor with eggs while he campaigned in the province's interior. JS relayed that the Governor knows that his candidacy "is not good for his political career." The Ambassador remarked that the Governor's strong declaration regarding the protests demonstrated his courage. (Note: Governor Scioli told the press that the protestors would have to kill him to prevent him from working. According to press reports, Scioli plans to campaign again in that particular district.)

¶5. (SBU) JS asked the Ambassador for his views of the congressional election's "symbolic candidates" ("candidatos testimoniales"). (Note: This term, coined by the press and the opposition, refers to candidates, such as Governor Scioli, who are running for elected offices that they are not expected to assume, in order to boost the FpV's victory chances.) The Ambassador replied that although it is a smart tactic by Peronist party president Nestor Kirchner (NK), the FpV's leading candidate in the province, it is not good for democracy. The Ambassador remarked that it was probably difficult for Scioli to refuse such a request by NK, given the heavy control of the national government over the province's purse strings.

¶6. (SBU) In closing, JS thanked the Ambassador for his close collaboration with Buenos Aires Province. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for both JS's and Governor Scioli's willingness to work with the Embassy on a wide range of issues. He asserted that the Embassy will continue to

welcome close relations with the provincial government under the new Ambassador.

Press

¶7. (SBU) Governor Scioli's office proposed issuing and coordinating a press release on the meeting, praising the Ambassador for his contribution to the bilateral relationship. The Ambassador also made public his regrets over the previous day's unfortunate incidents against Governor Scioli.

Comment

¶8. (C) JS's comments confirm what is evident between the lines in campaigning and press reports: the Scioli brothers are in somewhat of a straightjacket to remain publicly loyal to the Kirchners, though they maintain different views of democracy and politics.

WAYNE